



City of Tucson Senior Services Plan (10/22/08)

Mission Statement: *Through inter-departmental and inter-agency cooperation, the City of Tucson seeks to ensure that seniors have access to essential services and resources that will assist them in meeting their individual needs and enhance the community's quality of life. The six key areas in the City's efforts include Housing, Health and Wellness, Transportation, Information and Referral, Safety and Security, and Recreation.*

Housing

- ◆ The Public Housing Program owns and manages 1,505 public housing units of which 625 units are available to elderly and/or disabled residents at affordable rental rates. Currently there are 275 elderly residents taking advantage of this program.
- ◆ The Housing Choice Voucher (Section 8) Program provides rental assistance to approximately 4,700 households through which approximately 772 elderly persons are served.
- ◆ Health and safety issues such as adequate cooling or heating or functioning plumbing are addressed through City code enforcement efforts.
- ◆ Tenants displaced through condemnation are offered short-term housing at the owners' expense until dwellings are made habitable.
- ◆ Parks and Recreation staff has assisted over 500 older adults at Armory Park Senior Center with housing information, referrals and support since late 2005.
- ◆ Approximately \$600,000 in Human Services Funding has been allocated annually by Mayor and Council to community agencies in support of a variety of housing assistance programs (e.g. home repair, independent living, and reverse mortgage).

Health and Wellness

- ◆ The Tucson Fire Department Alpha Truck Program dispatches a pickup truck staffed by two firefighter/Emergency Medical Technicians and their equipment to handle non-emergent calls and better serve at-risk and vulnerable populations who require social services to meet their daily needs. Currently the City operates 4 of these alternative response vehicles.
- ◆ A component of the Tucson Fire Department's Office of Public Education and Information's Circle of Life Program focuses on making senior's home environment safer and on teaching behaviors that prevent falls and fires. This program is offered by TFD to seniors living in retirement communities, senior communities' home owner associations, senior groups at churches and recreation centers, assisted living facilities, and upon request through their request-for-service hotline.

Health and Wellness (Continued)

- ◆ Health literacy classes that help navigate the medical system are offered to public housing elderly residents. Counseling, referrals, and crisis intervention services are also available.
- ◆ Elderly public housing residents are offered fitness programs such as bone builders, balance and stretching, chair aerobics and Walk Across AZ. The UA Mobile Health Clinic offers medical information in areas such as preventative health care management through UA Nurses Wellness Clinics. Educational activities such as computer classes and instructional forums dealing with money management, relationship care, and safety awareness are also available.
- ◆ The Parks and Recreation Department offers health and wellness programs in partnership with Pima Council on Aging, Pima County Health Department, and public health nurses. During Fiscal Year 2008, three programs were offered: 1) *A Matter of Balance* – Two master trainers and seventeen coaches planned and conducted seventeen classes at El Rio, Armory, Udall, Randolph, Clements, Freedom, El Pueblo, and Northwest Neighborhood Centers, 2) *Enhanced Fitness* - Eight instructors were trained and classes were offered at Clements, El Pueblo, and Armory Recreation Centers, and 3) *Living Well with Chronic Conditions* - Public health nurses instructed classes at six recreation centers.
- ◆ A Parks and Recreation Health and Wellness Recreation Assistant plans and integrates Health and Wellness Programs into all Recreation/Neighborhood Centers' senior programming.
- ◆ Almost 100,000 meals are served annually to seniors at eight City Recreation/Neighborhood Centers through the federally-funded Congregate Meal Program. At Armory Park Senior Center, 7,000 meals are prepared and distributed annually to homebound seniors in the downtown area through the federally-funded Home Delivered Meal Program.
- ◆ Comprehensive annual Community Health Fairs for older adults are planned and conducted in six City Recreation/Neighborhood Centers.
- ◆ Approximately \$330,000 in Human Services Funding has been allocated annually by Mayor and Council to community agencies in support of a variety of health and wellness programs (e.g. caregiver training, nutrition, and emergency medication).

Transportation

- ◆ SunTran's reduced bus fare program for seniors 65 and older offers affordable transportation.
- ◆ Outreach programs providing education on transit services and passenger assistance and informational materials targeted to the senior audience are available through the City's Transit Customer Service Center and at various senior community events.
- ◆ A transit mobility training program educates the senior community on how to effectively utilize public transportation.
- ◆ VanTran service provides a safe, convenient and accessible transportation option 365 days a year to increase independence and travel flexibility.
- ◆ Transportation services are offered to elderly public housing residents funded through a federal grant awarded to Lutheran Social Services. Trips to various planned locations are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, and a monthly calendar of planned trips is distributed to residents.
- ◆ Rides to approximately 8,000 persons aged 60 and over are provided annually to and from Armory Park and El Rio Centers through a federal grant allocated by Pima Council on Aging.

Information and Referral

- ◆ Telephonic assistance at 792-CITY helps callers with information on community services and resources and also provides direct transfer capability.
- ◆ NOVA, the City of Tucson's intake and referral system, directs those who contact the City to the appropriate department for issue resolution.
- ◆ City staff has been trained as Pima Council on Aging "Ambassadors" and can direct inquiries for assistance to the appropriate agency or department
- ◆ Tucson Fire Department's Human Services Referral Program provides for evaluation of medical and human services needs of all individuals to which TFD responds. Depending upon the need, they will then be referred to the most appropriate health care facility or supporting agency.
- ◆ Parks and Recreation Department staff assists an average of twelve seniors per day with information, referrals, and support at Armory Park Senior Center.
- ◆ In April 2009, the Parks and Recreation Department will again plan, implement, and evaluate a "Boomers and Beyond Conference". In 2006, 150 persons from around the state attended the first conference that addressed the importance of shifting the paradigm in programs and services for the Boomer generation.

Safety and Security

- ◆ Tucson Police Department participates in Stop Abuse and Financial Exploitation of the Elderly (SAFE), a program to prevent, investigate, and prosecute neglect, abuse, and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults through cooperation and education. SAFE created an Elder Abuse 24 Hour Hotline (1-800-SOS-ADULT) and the Pima County Elder Abuse Investigation Task Force, and developed a process for dealing with domestic violence among the elderly.
- ◆ Seventeen classes on aging have been implemented at El Rio, Armory, Udall, Randolph, Clements, Freedom, El Pueblo and Northwest Neighborhood Centers through federal funding provided by Pima Council on Aging. Funding also provided for the training of two master trainers and seventeen coaches.

Recreation

- ◆ A variety of recreation/socialization programs are available to public housing elderly residents such as movie nights, bingo, and dinners to celebrate special events which are sponsored by Resident Councils or various agencies.
- ◆ Approximately \$63,000 in Human Services Funding has recently been allocated annually by Mayor and Council to community agencies in support of a variety of recreation programs (e.g. public housing residents' activities).
- ◆ Dedicated senior recreation centers (e.g., Armory, Udall, El Pueblo) as well as other City recreation centers offer comprehensive senior activities, services, and programs (including health and wellness). Over 225,000 visits have been documented specifically in senior programs at these sites.
- ◆ Parks and Recreation Department staff continually attend courses focusing on senior issues in order to stay informed, engaged, and trained in important areas (e.g. Arthritis Foundation instructor training, UA bone builders training, and The Arizona Senior Association Conference).
- ◆ A Parks and Recreation staff member holds Tucson's first Certified Senior Advisor credentials as awarded through the Society of Certified Senior Advisors. This certification helps enhance one's ability to serve the senior community by: a) understanding the financial, health, and social issues that seniors face, b) communicating more effectively with seniors, and c) recognizing what is important to seniors and creating better relationship building skills essential to earning credibility.